



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

International Federation for Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) Research Exchange Program: Local Actions with a Global Impact

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Research is the core of scientific and medical development. Many medical students are not exposed to research through their curricula which can affect their future ability to appraise articles and conduct research projects. Since 1991, International Federation for Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)'s Research Exchange Program has provided over 1.3 million students the opportunity to experience and learn about research.

The IFMSA Research Exchange Program is facilitated by students for their fellow students, providing a 4 to 8 weeks long research project with a tutor. The students participate in a Pre-Exchange and an Upon-Arrival Training to help them adapt to potential cultural differences and handle ethical issues. A Logbook is used to record skills learnt and evaluate their progress with their tutor. Each student fills in an evaluation form at the end of the exchange.

Currently, over 2500 students go on a research exchange each year to more than 70 countries. From analysing the evaluation forms from 2015 to present, we have found that more than 60% of students report no prior experience with research before their exchange. On a visual analog scale from 1 to 10, 73% marked their amount of learning as 7 or higher after the exchange. 73% also reported 7 or higher motivation to do research and 61% reported 7 or higher usefulness to future scientific career.

IFMSA has facilitated early exposure to research for thousands of students from different backgrounds and cultures for decades, contributing to better educational outcomes for students, and consequently, more successful careers in the research field. We also provide opportunities for students in poor-resource settings whose countries lack the infrastructure to construct high-quality research trainings. Our program enables students to start their academic journey and widen their cultural and social spectrums. These promising outcomes may result in better scientific conduct and translational medicine in the future.